

M E R C A T O R:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Thursday, June 25. to Saturday, June 27. 1713.

*The Design of this Paper is to open Peoples Eyes; that of its Opposers, is to blind and delude them.**The Argument of limiting our Woollen Manufactures to three Ports in France for their Importation, prov'd false.**All our Manufactures, and other Goods, free for Importation at all the Ports of France, except only Cloths and Cloth-Serges.**The Reason of limiting to certain Ports, explain'd.*

IT has been a very great Satisfaction in the Writing this Paper, that the Subject it is written upon is so capable of its own Demonstration, and carries its Evidence along with it; that Little, which has been said against it, has been so frivolous and self-confuting, that there has been no need to make Replies: Nothing has been wanting to Answer what is alledged against the Treaty of Commerce, but to open the Peoples Eyes to the Truth of Fact in every Particular, that they may see, when those Things are misrepresented, and thereby prevent being Imposed upon.

There is this Difference between what is intended by this Paper, and what by its Opposers, viz. That this Paper is Design'd and wholly Employ'd to Inform and Instruct the People; and they are chiefly Busy to Blind and Delude them; let this be the Test between them and us; the most Impartial Judges will Determine, whether are most likely to Deceive the People, those, who would close their Eyes and have them take what is said upon Trust; or those, who would open their Eyes, and leave them at full liberty to be their own Judges.

Many Delusions have been spread about to Amuse and Deceive the People in this Matter of the Treaty of Commerce with France; some of which have been Detected and duly Exposed, and many, who have been Deceived by them begin to recover their Judgments, and to find, that the Treaty, which they have been prevailed upon to Reject and Contemn, is really a Foundation of the most advantageous Commerce, that Britain can be engaged in; That the French must Trade with us under the most disadvantageous Conditions Imaginable; That our Export will be easie to us, their Import here hard and loaden with Burthens to them; and we begin to see these People now Repent the Opposition they have all along made to their Countries good, and would undo, what others have done, if it was in their Power to do so.

But there are still Mistakes behind, which must be Removed; and Objections, which however they may be

Ill-grounded, yet require some Notice of them; as especially this, (viz.) That there are but Three Ports in France, at which our Manufactures are admitted to be Imported, (viz.) St. Vallery on the *Soame*, Roan, and Bourdeaux. It is wonderful to Reflect, how much this prevails in the Minds of the People, considering it is evident, that the Limiting the Ports for Entry concern only the Two Species, (viz.) the Cloths and Cloth Serges, which is plain by the Specifications of the Treaty, and not at all the rest of our Woollen Manufactures. But as to all our other Woollen Manufactures, Bays, Says, Serges, Perpets, Stuffs, Druggets, Dozens, Kerfies, Stockings, &c. all our Re-exported Goods, such as Cottons, Indicoes, Sugars, East-India and Turkey Goods, and all other, they are freely allow'd by the Treaty to be Imported into all the Ports of France; and before this Treaty, they were confined to but Two Ports, (viz.) Calais, and St. Vallery on the *Soame*.

It has been said, that the Reason, why the French confin'd our said Woollen Manufactures to certain Ports for their Importation, was, that the Land-Carriage and Local Duties of the said Goods should rise so high upon them, that the Price should thereby be made too great for the Buyer, and give the advantage to their own Manufactures: Let such People but look back upon their own Arguments, they are not only false in themselves, but inconsistent with one another: for if this were true, then it must be true also, that their own Manufactures stood in need of those Helps; that their own Manufactures were so Inferiour to the English, that if the utmost Discouragements were not put upon the English Goods, the French Manufactures would not be Sold; that the English Manufactures so excelled the French in the real intrinsick Value, that if these were admitted, tho' upon the hardest Terms to be Imported into France, yet they would gain Ground there, and to be brief, would Sell before the French, albeit the Difference made by the Burthen of Duties there, was at that time above 40 per Cent. and these things they will not allow, having on many Occasions published that the French Manufactures

Manufactures are as good as Ours, and if permitted to come into England would ruine our own.

But on the other hand, this Suggestion cannot in general be true; for had it been so that the limiting the Importation of the Woollen Manufactures of Britain to a few certain Ports, was contriv'd to load the said Goods with the farther Burthens of Land-Carriage, &c. why then should the Ports they were limited to, be chosen out upon the greatest Navigable Rivers in France, nearest to the Places where the Centre of their Trade lay, and where the chief Consumption of our Manufactures was to be expected? For example, Roan and Bourdeaux. The City of Rouen lies on the River *Seine*, and is to Paris as Gravesend is to London: From thence the Navigation of the *Seine* conveys every thing by Water upon five great Rivers, (Viz.) by the *Oyse* and the *Aisne* into the Isle of France and the Lower Champaign to the City of Rhiemes, the Rhetelois, and the Edge of the Dutchy of Bar; by the River *Marne* through the whole Province of Champaign, by the *Yonne* into Burgundy and Nivernois, and by the River *Loyne* and the *Canal de Briare* into the great River *Loyre* to the Cities of Orleans, Nevers, Blois, Tours, Angers, &c. even down to the Ocean, and through the very Heart of France: Again, The City of Bourdeaux is the Centre of the English Commerce in France, and where the greatest number of our Ships resort for the Wine and Brandies which are brought from thence. Therefore appointing Bourdeaux as one of the Ports for the Import of our Manufactures, was rather making the Trade easy than difficult to the English, and so far from a Design of making our Goods dear and encreasing the Charges upon them, that it was rather giving Ease to it by opening that only Port, to which the English could bring them upon the easiest Terms of Freight; and where the greatest Demand for those Goods was to be found; where the principal Consumption of them might be expected, and where the greatest Convenience of Inland Navigation was to be had, in order to convey the said Manufactures to all Parts of the Kingdom of France: For the City of Bourdeaux stands on the *Garonne*, from whence they have a Navigation by other Rivers; (viz.) the *Dordogne* quite through Perigord and Limousin into Auvergne; by the River *Lot* through Quercy and Rouergue even to the *Severnes*, and by the Royal Canal from the City of *Toulonse* on the *Garonne* quite thro' the Province of *Languedoc* to *Narbonne*, and into the Mediterranean Sea; supplying the whole Provinces of Gascoign, Guienne, and Languedoc with British Manufactures by Water Carriage.

This rather seems to intimate to us, that the French King finding it convenient on other Accounts to limit the Importation of these Goods to certain Ports, yet appointed those Ports so, as that his Subjects might have the Goods brought with the greatest Ease and the least Charge that could be to those Markets, where the greatest Consumption of them was, and where the principal Traders in those Goods were settled; who from thence supplied the whole Kingdom by the Convenience of Water-Carriage: As to the Reason of Naming particular Ports and Places for the Importation of these Goods, it is known to those, who are acquainted with the Affairs of France, that it was occasioned by the differing Circumstances of the Contracts with the Farmers; and was a thing practised in other Cases in France, as well as in this of the Woollen Manufactures,

as particularly the Drugs and Spices, which are limited in almost the same manner.

Also this Limiting the Importation of Goods to certain Ports, is not a new practise or peculiar to France only; the like is done in England, particularly the Alamodes and Lustrings are confined to the Port of London; and the Importation of Wooll from Ireland is Limited to three or four Ports only, but however is so ordered, not that the Irish Wooll should by reason of Land-Carriage be made Dearer to our Manufacturers than the English, in order to Discourage the Importation of it; But for other particular Reasons, drawn from the Circumstances of the thing it self; and therefore the Towns, to which the Importation of Irish Wooll is Limited, are such, as are not only nearest and most convenient by their Situation for the coming from Ireland; but nearest and most convenient to those Parts of England, where the Manufacturers live, who make use of Irish Wooll; and are the principal Buyers and Consumers thereof; as *Minehead* for the Serge-Makers of Taunton; at Biddiford or Barnstable for the Serge-Makers of Exeter, Tiverton, &c. at Liverpool for the Clothiers of Yorkshire and Lancashire: And the like.

Had not the convenience of the Manufacturers been Consulted in this Limitation, but on the contrary, had it been Contrived or Appointed on purpose to add the Burthen and Expence of Land-Carriage to the Price of the Wooll, Bristol might have been named, Milford-Haven, or any Port in Wales, which tho' lying as well for the Navigation of the Irish Vessels, would yet have greatly encreased the Price of the Wooll to the Manufacturers, by the Charges of carrying it on Horseback after it was Landed. In like manner had the King of France Limited the Importation of the English Manufactures with Design, as it is alledged, to enhance the Price by Land-Carriage, he would have chosen such Ports for their Importation, as were most remote from those Parts, where the principal Consumption of them was known to be, and most remote from the Convenience of Water-Carriage: This was very easie for him to have done, had he named the Cities of Rochelle and St. Mallo, for example, instead of *Roan* and *Bourdeaux*; the Case had been quite altered, there being no River navigable near them; and then it would have been difficult to have assigned any other Reason for such Limitation, than that of Discouraging and Burthening the Trade: But as it is now, there is no room for any Supposition of that kind.

Further, It might be Demanded, why the French King should not rather lay still higher Duties on the said Woollen Manufactures, than study to raise their Price by the Difficulties of their Importation; the former being the readiest Method of Discouraging their Market, and which would at the same time have brought in some Gain to the Crown, which is an Article they are far from being forgetful of in France.

This may be sufficient to overthrow the Arguments drawn from this Pretence, and to show the Absurdity of the Mistake itself. The next Paper shall Enquire into the state of the Woollen Manufacture in France; how far the same is Improved, and how, as the Folly of our former Prohibitions of Commerce have been the occasion of it; so had the Treaty of Commerce been now made Effectual, the Woollen Manufactures in France would in Time be all overthrown and come to nothing.

